

Kaalsee Da Rikhee by Bhai Veer Singh Jee

From Sri Kalgidhar Chamatkar Translation by Bimal Kaur

PART I

Raja Medni Prakash, who ruled the small state of Nahan in the Himalayan foothills, was having a meeting with his trusted Minister, Vazir Harji.

Raja: "Have you any news, Harji ?"

Vazir: "Your Highness I The news is not good, I am afraid. An engagement has been announced between the daughter of Raja Fateh Shah and the son of Raja Bhimchand".

These two were the rulers of adjoining states and a constant threat to Nahan.

Raja: "So it has happened I (Looking up at the heavens, he heaved a sigh). *All along, the desire for a son has been a source of deep unhappiness to me and now comes this new danger to my kingdom*".

Harji: "I too am extremely worried. As it is, Fateh Shah has been continuously threatening to declare war, and now with this alliance, he will make our lives miserable".

Raja: "What is the way out?"

Vazir: "I have not been able to find a solution so far and can only hope for some heavenly intervention to help us."

Raja: "It's been my experience that Gods and Goddesses are unable to bring down heavens blessings. I have prayed and made offerings at innumerable temples, for the gift of a son, but to no avail. I am convinced now that there is no truth in such things - it is only an illusion. But maybe if we met some holy man and asked for his blessings, it might work. I have heard of one Budhu Shah, but he is a Muslim and then there is Ramrai, whose miraculous powers have made even Emperor Aurangzeb, bow to him, but he is an ally of our enemy Fateh Shah, who worships him. So all paths are blocked for us. The only thing we can do is to increase the army and prepare for battle, and when the time comes, to die fighting. This way, though this world will be lost, at least honor will be ours in the next."

Vazir: "Yes, to keep in readiness for battle is wise. And when there is threat from outside, it is also sound statesmanship. It's a warriors duty to die in the battlefield, but there must not be under—lying sadness and hopelessness behind this action. Effort, spirited effort must be made at all times".

Raja: "I agree with you

Vazir: (After thinking for some time) "I have heard of an old Brahmin who has been doing meditation for a number of years and who lives near the boundary of Nahan. Why don't we go to him and ask his advice? I believe he is a realized soul, and has mastered the super—natural elements. I am sure his blessings will help us."

Meanwhile, we must also organize and arm our defence forces. Please do your best to convince her Highness your mother, that the time has come for her to give the keys of the royal treasure to you, so that wealth accumulated by the previous rulers can be utilized now. We are facing acute danger at present".

Raja : "Yes, you are right, I shall speak to my mother. But when do we go to meet the Brahmin?"

Vazir: "I think we should leave at dawn tomorrow. To all appearances it should look as if you are going on a hunt. Once there, we shall find an opportunity to slip away".

Raja: "How far will we have to go?"

Vazir: "It is about 20—25 miles east of this town, on the banks of the Jamuna river where it meets the Tons river. Across the river can be seen the village of Kaalsi. There is a very deep wood in which the Brahmin has his hut, surrounded by trees and thorny bushes. He lives there with only a young lad to care for him and a couple of cows, whose milk he and the boy live on".

Raja: "Very well. Let us keep to this plan then".

They parted, and the Raja went to see his mother as the money was urgently needed for further arms and ammunition. The Vazir hurried to the quarters of the army chief to discuss ways to increase the security of the kingdom.

Early next morning the Raja, the Vazir and the army chief. along with some soldiers and helpers set off on their horses for hunting.

In the afternoon they decided to take rest, while the others busied themselves setting up camp, the Raja and his Vazir quietly rode away and soon came to the clearing in which the Brahmin lived. On a wooden platform in front of his hut, the old man sat on a grass mat. He appeared to be over 100 years old. There was no flesh on his body, all the bones could be seen, but even though his shoulders were hunched and he looked very frail, he emanated an aura of strength.

Vazir Harji entered and bowed respectfully. The Brahmin recognized him and bade him welcome.

Vazir: "His Royal Highness is waiting outside and wishes for permission to enter".

The Brahmin immediately stood up on his trembling legs, and said, "It is my good fortune that he has come - even as a king he is welcome. The Vazir helped the old man to sit and said, "Please don't strain yourself. The king will come in on his own. He has not come as royalty, but as a seeker of your blessings". Then he went out to where the Raja was waiting and escorted him in. The Raja bowed to the Brahmin and sat down near him. Once the formalities were over, the Raja narrated the events which had led him to seek the Brahmin's advice.

Brahmin: "I have lived and meditated in your realm for a long time and I cannot see it being destroyed. May the Almighty bless you and your kingdom remain secure for a long time to come. But there is real danger to you from this alliance between Fateh

Shah and Bhim Chand, and the super-natural powers of Ramrai, who has complete control over the elements, can be formidable".

"I myself don't give importance to such powers and my Guru, my teacher had advised me not to waste time dabbling in miracles. My life-long desire, and for which I have prayed constantly, is to have a vision of the Almighty, whether in human form or spiritually it matters not. Alas I this remains unfulfilled till this day," he said and his eyes filled with tears.

Vazir: *"Forgive us for interrupting your routine, but we are needy people and impatient to find solutions to our problems".*

Brahmin: *"As it is a Kings duty to protect his people, so it is the duty of the people to be patriotic and vigilant towards the land they dwell in. I have been very happy here and your coming here is not an inconvenience for me. I pray that the Lord helps and guides you". He paused and the next moment his face seemed to brighten, and a glow appeared in his eyes. He closed them momentarily and then shook his head. When he opened his eyes again, they were moist. After a while, he said, "O King, this is the 'Kalyug' and three parts of it are almost over. It is time for a great soul to appear on this earth, and I believe he is here already but I do not know the exact place where he lives. If you can find him, all your troubles will be over".*

Raja: *"How do we find him without knowing his whereabouts?"*

Brahmin: *"O King, my life has been spent praying to various gods and goddesses and some living 'gurus' too, to guide me so that I may see the Almighty God. Lately, when I have sat down in meditation, a saintly vision appears, and tells me not to despair, that He himself has arrived in this world. His bearing is royal and he is involved in battles, therefore he wears armor. But he is the true savior, sent from Heaven to bring relief to suffering humanity. If I could see Him, I am sure I would recognize Him. He is young, with a divine aura about him".*

Raja: *"What is His name?"*

Brahmin: *"That I don't know. I wouldn't have stopped here a minute, but set out to search for him, if I had strength in my legs. As it is, to go up to the river for a bath, I need to be supported or carried by this lad. It is ironical that when the time has come for my life—long wish to be fulfilled, my feeble body is letting me down. I only pray that I may see Him before I die, and experience the divine bliss which one feels only in the presence of the Almighty. O Raja, you have strength, wealth and man - power, you try and search for Him. You will find the solution you are looking for, and I — if it is my good fortune —will get an answer to my prayers. May be its God's will, and it is He who has guided your foot—steps to my humble abode, so that I can give you the details to help you in your search. Then maybe you can bring Him here, or take me to him, so that my waiting eyes can satisfy themselves with his 'darshan'."*

Listening to the Brahmin's talk and sensing the deep longing of his heart, made the Raja and his minister very eager to go in search of this personage. They questioned the Brahmin for some more details.

Brahmin: "Yes, he is young and extremely handsome. He has beautiful doe - like eyes, his arms are very long so that when he lowers them his hands touch his knees. He emanates a powerful aura and though he wears weapons on his person and lives in royal style, he is the True one - sent from Heaven, in answer to our pleadings and prayers".

The Raja and Vazir exchanged glances.

Raja: "Could it be the one from Kalhoor, who is Bhima's enemy?"

Brahmin: "Enemy? He is no one's enemy He is love incarnate, beloved of all "

Raja: "Mahraj, if as you say he is a messiah sent by the Almighty, then he should look saintly like you — a man of peace. How can a warrior, carrying arms be the spiritual messenger of God?"

Brahmin: "Why it is so, I cannot say, but if you look back, we Brahmins only performed rituals, organized prayers and recited the Vedas".

"It was the Kshatriyas who ruled the world, and also knew how to follow the path of self-realization. So, there is nothing odd in a messiah coming in the form of a warrior and a 'Guru'. So, go now and search him out, but don't forget me — help me to see him. May God fulfill all your wishes "

Vazir: "Rikhiji, do such people have long hair?"

Brahmin: "All holy men have long hair - in fact the Vedas describe the Almighty God as one with long hair and a beautiful, flowing beard".

Vazir: (in an aside to the Raja) - "This too fits the person we are thinking of".

Brahmin: "What I have learnt is that his actions will be good, and based on Truth, but though he appears to be one person, he reflects ten spirits".

This was another clue, which confirmed to the Raja and Vazir that they were thinking along the right lines.

Raja: "Rikhiji, we have managed to form some idea, and will now set out to search in that direction. If we find him, we shall ask him for help. We shall also try that he should come here".

Brahmin: "Yes, yes, do that, I am sure I will be able to recognize him".

Raja: "Do you know if he is more powerful than Ramrai? Can he command my enemies to be destroyed? Can he bless me with a son?"

Brahmin: "O Raja, souls sent directly by the Lord, do not have to make efforts to develop super—natural powers. Their spiritual status is such that whatever they say comes true. But if you ask them to perform miracles, they will not do so. They believe in following the will of God. However if at any time they happen to make a pronouncement, it generally comes true. They lack Ego, which plagues the lives of

creatures like you and me. Their knowledge is a result of their focus on the Almighty alone".

Soon the Raja and his Vazir departed from the ashram.

They came to the conclusion that the person who fitted the Brahmin's description, could only be Guru Gobind Singh. Even if it turned out that he was not a messiah, he was brave and a warrior and the fame of his army had spread far and wide. If they could make him a friend and ally, they would become a force to be reckoned with.

Once they reached Nahan, the Raja sent another minister named Sobhu, with a number of costly gifts, to meet Guru Gobind Singh ji at Anandpur. The Vazir wanted to meet Guruji in private and give him the Raja's message, but Guruji took the letter and read it out aloud, so that the whole congregation could hear. He then told the Vazir that he would give him his reply the next morning.

That evening Guruji discussed the matter with his uncle, Mama Kripal Chand, and Munshi Saheb Chand and other advisers. He spoke about it to his mother also. Everyone was of the opinion that they should accept the Raja's invitation and leave for Nahan. The Vazir was sent off to carry the news of Guruji's arrival to the Raja.

All arrangements were made for the journey and on a pleasant day in October, Guruji accompanied by his mother, Mata Gujari, his family and other followers set off for Nahan. A company of 500 armed soldiers was in attendance.

After making a couple of halts on the way they reached Nahan. The news of Guruji's arrival had already reached the Palace. Raja Medni Prakash and senior members of his court had come to the outskirts of the city to welcome the holy entourage. Here the head priest, the Brahmins, and the big businessmen were also waiting. The head priest performed 'Aarti' in a traditional welcome, and showed the respect befitting a descendent of Guru Nanak Devji. Each of them bowed to Guruji and received his blessings. Then holding the reins of Guruji's horse the Raja led the party into the town.

They were housed in a special mansion, prepared for this visit. A Gurdwara to mark the place stands there to this day.

The news of Guruji's arrival in Nahan and the royal welcome given to him, echoed throughout the valley. Ramrai too heard the news. He promptly sent a message to Fateh Shah, King of Srinagar, "Friend, the Master has arrived. Even though I have opposed him, I sincerely believe in his supremacy. I will be unable to use my powers against Raja Medni Prakash, now. As a friend, I can only advise you to give up your aggressive stance where Medni Prakash is concerned, and to voluntarily hand over to him those areas which you have occupied".

Raja Fateh Shah too had heard about Guruji's arrival in Nahan, along with his army. Now this message from Ramrai set him thinking. Ramrai had his followers spread far and wide in his state and if he disobeyed Ranirai, there was a great possibility these people would turn against him. So, he quietly sent a message to Medni Prakash informing him of his decision to return the occupied areas to him.

Raja Medni Prakash was extremely happy at this news. He attributed it directly to Guruji's grace, and with renewed enthusiasm he began to serve him.

Guruji sent Mama Kripal Chandji to meet Fateh Shah and convey his message that the fighting among the rulers of the hill kingdoms must be stopped. If they wanted their people to be happy and prosperous they must create an atmosphere of friendship and co-operation. They could fight back the invaders and save themselves from becoming slaves only by a united effort.

Fateh Shah accompanied Mama Kripal Chandji back to Nahan and here, under Guruji's benign gaze a treaty of peace and friendship was signed.

Medni Prakash was very keen that Guruji should make Nahan his permanent home. He escorted Guruji to the most beautiful parts of his state and organized hunting trips into the thick jungles. Guruji liked one particular spot very much. It overlooked the fast flowing Jarnuna river and the thickly wooded hills beyond. Raja Medni Prakash ordered the builders and carpenters to erect a fortress type home for Guruji and rooms to house the members of the congregation. This place is called PAONTA SAHEB, and the Gurdwara and some parts of the original construction mark the place.

When the people heard that Guruji planned to stay here, they came from far and near. Daily prayers and Kirtan 'darbars' were organized. A large number of assorted tents and temporary structures were put up by the eager people. Guruji organized contests of physical daring in the river waters and on the land. He took expeditions into the jungles for hunting lion and other ferocious animals. It was a time of joyful activity on every front - physical, mental and spiritual. Guruji created the largest volume of poetry during this period. A number of writers, poets and artists gathered here, and received great encouragement and praise from Guruji.

The construction of the buildings was going on very quickly as it was everyone's wish that Guruji's birthday should be celebrated with his entry into the new home.

One morning Guruji appeared very restless. The season had turned very cold, even though the hills were still without snow. Guruji arose late and reached the 'diwan where 'Kirtan was being performed much later than usual. He was overheard saying "Its very cold, the bones cant take the cold any more - old, so very old now "

Those standing near were surprised, but held their peace, because they knew that there was some reason behind it, which would be revealed to them in due time.

Suddenly, Guruji turned to the Vazir and gave him a message for the Raja, "Please ask him to accompany me for a hunt into the hills, and to take along a 'PALKI (palanquin) with 6 to 8 men to carry it".

PART II

The Raja and his Vazir had long forgotten their promise to the old Brahmin. Now that their problems had been solved and the tensions removed, they had become immersed in other activities. Such is human nature

But the old man still lingered - his desire unfulfilled. At times he would mutter to himself: "I love — but my love is not returned, Will I ever experience that spiritual joy for which my soul is thirsting? To see Him with my own eyes, before they finally close - oh dear God, grant me this one boon. I know He is here, quite near - I can feel His presence," and he would begin to cry like a child.

The young lad named Chando, who looked after him would become very upset, thinking it was his fault that the Rikhiji was unhappy. He was a simple village boy, left at the 'ashram' by his mother when she felt her end was near. Since then he had taken on the duties of looking after the old Rikhi, keeping the place clean and milking the two cows, which supplied sustenance to both of them.

One day the old man called Chando to him and said, "Child I feel that my days on this earth are coming to an end. I may go at any time. When that happens, place my body in the lap of the Jamuna river, and you take the cows and go off to your village. If one day you hear that a great saint has appeared in the world, go to him and give Him my message. Tell him that an old Rikhi living on the banks of the Jamuna has passed on, taking an unfulfilled desire for your 'darshan' in his heart. His legs were weak so he could not come in search of you, neither did he have the wealth or servants to do his bidding. He was only aware of your presence and could sense it on the breezes sighing in the trees but could not come to you. Carrying this wish deep in his heart he has departed from this world. He prayed to you to keep his soul in your protection".

The boy learnt all this by heart and repeated it so that he should not forget anything. Then he cried out, "But if you go, what will I do?"

Rikhi: "You can go in search of him. Maybe you will have better luck than I, and maybe when you give Him the message He will bless you and allow you to stay with Him".

The boy wanted to know how he would recognize the person the Rikhi wanted him to find.

Rikhi: "He is tall, slimly built, very strong, young, carries weapons on his person, has long hair and a soft curly beard. He has an aura of power and authority, and his expression is warm and Sweet".

Boy: "But how will I know it is Him?"

Rikhi: "Well, there is one other thing. He has very long arms and when he lowers them, His hands reach to His knees".

The boy was happy to hear this, because this would be easy to check. He immediately stood up to see the length of his own arms and then checked the Rikhi's arms. He was satisfied that with this clue he would be able to recognize the 'Avtaar'.

Suddenly a thought struck him, "Rikhiji, will He lower His arms if I ask Him?"

The Rikhi smiled at his simplicity and said, "You stay close beside Him but don't ask anything. At some time He will surely lower His arms, and then you can see. Once you are sure, fling yourself at His feet and give my message to Him".

Boy: "Does He have a name?"

Rikhi: "I don't know, but people will refer to Him as "Guru Avtaar".

Boy: "Guru, Guru, yes I can remember that. Shall I go now and look for Him. Then you can see Him with your own eyes? But - but if I go, who will take care of you. If I had a brother I would have left him with you, but I have no - one

Rikhi: "Don't be unhappy. After finishing your work here, you can go down into the valley everyday and if you meet any passerby, you can ask him. Maybe we will get some news in this way.

This remark cheered up the boy. Happily he began his daily chores, and the moment he was free he ran down to the village. Here he spent his time looking at the arms of the men and gauging their length.

Then he began to ask the people if they had heard of a saint - a Guru - who had recently appeared. Disappointed at the replies he began to walk beside the river every afternoon. He waited eagerly for some passer - by, but days passed and no - one came that way.

The days were becoming extremely cold, and the Rikhi could feel it penetrate his bones, chilling them. One day, he could not even get up to have his bath, and calling Chando, spoke in a feeble voice, "Child, my time has come. My hands and feet are very cold. You have been as a son to me. Don't forget what I asked you to do and to take my message".

For a minute Chando felt dizzy. Two years ago his mother had died: her hands and feet too had become very cold. He could see the scene clearly. Chando's whole world had consisted of only two people - his mother and the old Rikhiji. And now he was going to be left alone. He rushed out, wiping the tears with his knuckles. Quickly he lit the small stove and took it inside the hut, and kept it near the Rikhi. Covering him with some more blankets, he ran out and climbed up a near - by rock, looking eagerly down the path - maybe He will come even now?

Two, three times he ran back to the hut, but could see no improvement in the Rikhi's condition. In sheer desperation, a scream escaped from his throat. The sound revived the Rikhi and in a trembling voice he asked, "Has He come?"

Chando only heard 'Come', and shouting 'He has come! He has come!' he rushed out. His voice echoed back from the distant hills and then there was silence. He ran on for a few miles and then stopped and looked around. It was very quiet. The only sound was of the water striking the rocks. Like a demented soul, Chando began to run again, but stopped suddenly when he heard voices.

A group of riders came through the trees. One was slightly ahead of the other four. Chando paused and took a long look at him. He felt a thrill run through his slight body, but to be sure, he had to see the arms. Meantime the riders stopped in the clearing. Mattresses were put on the floor and the leader got off his horse and sat down. Poor Chando. He hid behind a shrub, barely able to contain his impatience. Part of him wanted to rush back to the 'ashram', to be with Rikhiji, but some part of him would not let him move - and all the time he waited for the leader to stand up so he could see the length of his arms.

Suddenly, one of the other riders came up with a jug of water and requested the leader to wash his hands. He got up and moved a little distance away. Chando stood as if rooted to the spot, holding his breath and not daring to blink his eyes lest he missed any movement, while the tall man washed his hands and then his face. Taking a towel offered by one of his followers he wiped his face, and then he lowered his arms. Chando could not believe his eyes — yes, surely the hands reached down to the knees. Chando let out a shout and completely forgetting his master's admonitions he rushed up, chanting "He has come, he has come." Then kneeling in front of him, he took hold of his hand, and pulling it down touched it to the knee, then nodding to himself, he said, "Yes, it is so". He looked up and in a pleading tone asked, "It is you? Really you — isn't it? Please say yes, that you are He — the avtaar, my master has waited for — the 'Guru avtaar' — please, please say you are He"?

Guruji stood quietly. His hand held tightly by this innocent boy who tugged at it - his words tripping over each other in his eagerness to establish His identity - looking up at Him imploringly. Guruji looked at him, a gentle smile lighting His eyes, his face wearing a soft and indulgent expression.

Chando said "Please, please tell me - you are He - the avtaar?"

Suddenly Chando's face darkened, his brows drew together and he said, "I have a message for you, a message from the Rikhi of Kaalsi. He knew you, sir, and he was desperate to have your 'darshan', yes he - his voice choked on his tears and he said after a pause, - I am sure he must be dead by now. My mother too was dead in this much time. He had told me that you would have very long arms with the hands touching the knees, and he begged me to find you and give his message to you - and, closing his eyes tightly in concentration he recited the words exactly as the old Rikhi had spoken them.

As the words came to an end Guruji closed His eyes. He held Chando's small hands tightly in His own. There was a slight movement of His brows and He spoke, "Child, is Rikhiji really dead?"

Chando: "I am sure - sir I So much time has passed. But please tell me that it is you, my master was talking about. Oh, its so late I must go back and take care of the body," and he hopped from foot to foot impatiently.

Guruji (smiling slightly): "No, my child I The Rikhiji is not dead". He turned towards Raja Medni Prakash and said, "Come let us leave immediately. There is a debt on your head which is long over—due. Don't worry about the food. We will have fresh milk today".

Quickly Guruji leapt on to His horse and at a sign, one of the other riders lifted Chando on to his horse and the party moved off at a brisk trot.

The Rikhi's hut was surrounded by a thorny hedge, with a make-shift gate in the middle. Pushing this open Chando rushed in. Rikhiji was lying unmoving as he had left him.

Guruji moved forward and lifting the blanket checked the Rikhi's pulse and felt his forehead. It was cool to the touch and he did not appear to be breathing. Chando gave one look, then squeezing his eyes shut exclaimed, "Oh, you have died like my mother did, and I was not here to even light a lamp for you. She too had wanted more light, but - but - I did give your message - see?" and then he began to sob.

Guruji's eyes were moist at the anguish of this simple, loving boy. But His face wore a look of concentration as His hand rested on the old man's chest, which still retained some warmth. Quickly Guruji stepped up to the platform and sitting near the Rikhi, placed his head in His lap and began to rub his scalp softly. He instructed the Raja and his companions to each massage the Rikhi's hands and feet. Chando stood on one side, his arms across his chest, one fist under his chin, watching all this activity in wonder.

In a short while the Rikhi's eyes fluttered open but closed again. Chando murmured to himself. "My mother too had opened her eyes once and then closed them forever

The Rikhi's eyes opened again and his lips moved. Very faintly he said, "He has come?"

After a pause, in a stronger voice he called, "Chando, beta, has someone come? Who is caressing my head so lovingly? What is this warm sensation flowing through me?"

Then he looked at the people seated near his feet and asked, "Who are you? Where is Chando?" Chando moved forward and eagerly said, "Rikhiji, it is He. I found him, I found him " And he clapped his hands joyfully.

The Rikhi took a long breath and looked upwards questioningly. Guruji bent and kissed his forehead.

The Rikhi's face glowed suddenly and with new - found energy, he reached up and clasped Guruji's hand - sometimes kissing it, sometimes placing it on his forehead and then holding it tight against his chest as if he would never let it go.

All who watched were profoundly moved at this scene of love - and the fulfillment of a life - time of yearning and devotion.

Chando looked on, not understanding, but feeling the warmth and wanting to be part of it. He looked at the long slender hands which reached to the knees and he too wanted to hold and kiss them. But he hesitated, knowing that these hands were infusing fresh life into his beloved Rikhiji, and he did not want to intrude. And so he stood trembling, in a corner.

The Rikhi's eyes were gazing up at Guruji, gratefully, adoringly and he said, "SHUKAR" (thanks to the Lord), and then repeated it again and again.

Guruji spoke, "Nihal, Nihal, Nihal " (blessing him)' Say Waheguru ' And it was as if each and every part of him echoed, "Waheguru".

The Rikhi was fully recovered now and he thought, "Truly He has come. It was not a figment of my imagination. He is here, but I have not even greeted Him and bowed at His feet, and he tried to get up. But Guruji held him in His arms and told him to lie still until full strength had returned.

Now Guruji turned to the Raja and said, "Please get some hot milk for Rikhiji. It will revive him further".

Hearing this Chando jumped up. He had been looking at Guruji's hands without blinking but now at the word 'milk' he quickly ran out and soon brought a bowl of fresh milk of his favorite black cow. Guruji took it from him and helped the Rikhi to sip it, saying, "Come, drink it, O beloved of my Lord" and the old man eagerly drank, feeling new life coursing in his feeble body. The Raja came forward with a cushion and arranged it so that the Rikhi could rest against it comfortably.

Now Guruji got up and looking at Chando, smiled and said, "Come, my son, bring milk for us too. We are guests in Rikhiji's house. Since he is not strong enough to do the duties of a host, you must look after us. Hurry, child and serve all of us.

Chando was in two minds. Part of him wanted to rush out to obey the sweet command. But the other side of him could not think beyond the single - minded wish, which had been in his heart as he had started at Guruji's beautiful hands.

He hesitated, but Guruji was only too aware of the struggle going on in the child's mind, and smiling He extended His right hand. Chando leapt forward like a puppy and catching it in both his hands, began to shower kisses on it only pausing to look up adoringly at Gurujis face.

In his childish delight, he was not aware of the solemnity of the occasion nor of the magnitude of the gift being showered on him. He was only aware of an acute joy which made him stutter out, "Wah, Wah, Waheguru !" His eyes closed and he became still.

Guruji lifted Chando in His arms saying gently, "Awake, my son, awake Chand Rai, to eternal life. Come we are all thirsty and hungry. Arent you going to offer us milk?"

Chando looked as if he was in seventh heaven. He picked up the pitcher and was soon back with it full of foaming, warm milk. Guruji filled bowls and gave to everyone and then to Chando. Finally He too had some.

The sun had set and darkness was spreading. They made camp and decided to leave at dawn the following day.

In the morning the Rikhi requested Guruji to let him stay back in the 'ashram' as he did not wish to be a burden. "I cannot serve you in any way, my Lord, please leave me here." he pleaded.

But Guruji reassured him and helped him into the wooden palanquin in which he would be comfortably carried to Paonta.

Chando waited for Guruji to tell him what to do. Guruji gave him an enquiring look and asked. "Chando, beta, what do you want? Would you like to stay and look after the cows?"

Chando ran forward and catching Guruji's beloved hand said in a pleading tone, "I want to be with you, but you go ahead, and I will follow with the cows. I can look after them in Paonta and get fresh milk for you, thats all I want".

Guruji laughed and said, "All right, I promise to drink the milk of your cows only".

Leaving two attendants to guide Chando and the cows to Paonta, Guruji and Raja Medni Prakash left for Paonta with the Rikhi accompanying them.

Many people had come to Paonta from far and near as it was Guruji's birthday and lavish celebrations were planned by Guruji's family and the 'Sangat'.

When Guruji failed to return on 'Saptami' day, everyone was filled with disappointment. But the next day when He and His party reached Paonta, a wave of gladness swept the place, and everyone rushed forward to greet Him.

Later, after 'Kirtan' had been performed, Guruji recited a hymn, the essence of which was that a true devotee does not bind himself to days and dates. "The Lord who has created everything - the hours, the days and months - He had sent us on a mission, to bring salvation to a devoted soul, who had spent his whole life in meditation. We have brought him, the Rikhi of Kaalsi to the 'darbar' of the nine Gurus so he can spend the rest of his life here as member of the 'SADH SANGAT'.